



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/680,272	10/07/2003	Romelia H. Flores	BOC9-2003-0016 (384)	6342
40987	7590	12/27/2007		
AKERMAN SENTERFITT P. O. BOX 3188 WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33402-3188			EXAMINER PARK, GEORGE M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			4114	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			12/27/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/680,272	Applicant(s) FLORES ET AL.	
	Examiner GEORGE PARK	Art Unit 4114	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 October 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>7/2/2004</u> . | 6) ☐ Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Art Unit: 4114

3. Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 11-16, 18, 21, 25-27, 29, 30 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over de l'Etraz et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,138).

Regarding to claims 1, 15 and 25, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. De l'Etraz et al. discloses a software method for analyzing relationships between individuals (as per claim 1) (column 3, lines 19-21), a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 15) (column 25, lines 56-62, column 26, lines 6-10) and system (as per claim 25) (column 3, lines 19-21) comprising the steps of: recording (i.e. storing) at least one relationship based upon business concerns (i.e. organization structure and project-specific collaborations) (column 4, lines 3-5, column 14, lines 12-15); recording (i.e. storing) at least one relationship based upon social interactions (i.e. family relationships) (column 13, lines 64-67, column 16, lines 38-42); querying (i.e. searching) said recorded relationships (column 22, lines 51 and 57-61); and generating a query result from said querying step, wherein said querying step queries business concerns and social relationship data (column 3, lines 40-45). However, de l'Etraz et al. does not explicitly disclose recording at least one relationship based upon project-specific collaborations. It is common knowledge in the prior art for business concerns (column 4, lines 3-5) to include relationships based upon project-specific collaborations. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for the software method (as per claim 1), a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 15) and system (as per claim 25) (column 3, lines 19-21) of de l'Etraz et al., to include the feature of recording at least one relationship based upon project-specific

Art Unit: 4114

collaborations as taught by de l'Etraz et al., as de l'Etraz et al. is directed to the software method (as per claim 1), a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 15) and system (as per claim 25) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to analyze relationships based on various types of relationships.

Regarding to claims 2 and 16, de l'Etraz et al. discloses associating an affinity value (i.e. contact level) to at least one said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative strength of said relationship (column 24, lines 46-50).

Regarding to claim 4 and 18, de l'Etraz et al. discloses said querying step further comprising the steps of: identifying at least two individuals; and determining at least one relationship linkage (i.e. contact pathway) between said identified individuals (column 3, lines 43-45, column 18, lines 6-9).

Regarding to claims 7 and 21, de l'Etraz et al. discloses said generating step further comprising the step of: generating at least one chart (i.e. graphical representation) illustrating said query result (column 3, lines 34-37, see Figs. 25A and 25B).

Regarding to claim 11, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. De l'Etraz et al. discloses a relationship management system (column 3, lines 19-21) comprising: a data storage framework (i.e. database) for storing multiple relationships of a plurality of relationship categories (column 10, lines 26-35), wherein said relationship categories include business concerns (i.e. organization and project-specific) (column 4, lines 3-5, column 14, lines 12-15), and social relationships (i.e. family relationships) (column 13, lines 64-67, column 16, lines 38-42); and a query engine (i.e. search engine) configured to receive inquiries and

Art Unit: 4114

responsively generate responses based on data stored within said data storage framework (column 22, lines 51-63). However, de l'Etraz et al. does not explicitly disclose wherein said relationship categories include project-specific relationships. It is common knowledge in the prior art for business concerns (column 4, lines 3-5) to include project-specific relationships. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for the relationship management system of de l'Etraz et al. to include the feature of wherein said relationship categories include project-specific relationships as de l'Etraz et al. is directed to the system for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to analyze relationships based on various types of relationships.

Regarding to claim 12, de l'Etraz et al. discloses a relationship illustrator configured to graphically illustrate said responses (i.e. graphical user interface) (column 3, lines 22-23 and 34-37).

Regarding to claim 13, de l'Etraz et al. disclose a linkage analyzer (i.e. contact intelligence data mining tool) configured to determine at least one relationship linkage (i.e. contact pathway) between two individuals (column 5, lines 37-41, column 9, lines 32-36).

Regarding to claim 14, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. De l'Etraz et al. discloses managing affinity values (i.e. contact level) stored within said data storage framework, wherein said affinity values (i.e. contact level) are associated with at least a portion of said relationships, and wherein said affinity values quantify a relative strength of associated relationships (column 24, lines 46-50). However, de L'Etraz et al. does not explicitly disclose a relationship weight engine. It is common knowledge in the prior art for the relationship management system to include a relationship weight engine where the affinity value

Art Unit: 4114

data can be edited and updated (column 16, lines 67 to column 17, lines 1-2). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for the relationship management system of de l'Etraz et al. to include a relationship management weight engine configured to manage affinity values stored within said data storage framework, wherein said affinity values are associated with at least a portion of said relationships, and wherein said affinity values quantify a relative strength of associated relationships as de l'Etraz et al. is directed to the system for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to edit and update affinity values.

Regarding to claim 26, 29 and 32, de l'Etraz et al. discloses a software method for managing relationships (as per claim 26) (column 3, lines 19-21), a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 29) (column 25, lines 56-62, column 26, lines 6-10) and system (as per claim 32) (column 3, lines 19-21) comprising the steps of: receiving data for a plurality of relationships involving a plurality of individuals (column 3, lines 40-45); categorizing said relationships into a plurality of categories (i.e. tables) (column 13, lines 64-67, column 14, lines 12-15); recording (i.e. storing) said categorized relationships (column 10, lines 29-33); querying (i.e. searching) said recorded relationships based upon specified relationship parameters (column 22, lines 51 and 57-61); and generating a relationship report responsive to said querying step (column 3, lines 45-47). However, de l'Etraz et al. does not explicitly disclose wherein said relationship report contains relationship data from at least two of said categories. It is common knowledge in the prior art for an individual to have multiple types of relationships. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the

Art Unit: 4114

invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 26), a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 29) and system (as per claim 32) (column 3, lines 19-21) of de l'Etraz et al., with the feature of wherein said relationship report contains relationship data from at least two of said categories as de l'Etraz et al. is directed to the software method (as per claim 26), a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 29) and system (as per claim 32) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to manage relationships having multiple categories of relationships.

Regarding to claims 27 and 30, de l'Etraz et al. discloses determining an affinity value (i.e. contact level) for each of said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative strength of said relationship (column 24, lines 46-50).

4. Claims 3, 5, 6, 10, 17, 19, 20, 24, 28 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over de l'Etraz et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,138) and in view of Senay (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0038218 A1).

Regarding to claims 3 and 17, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. De l'Etraz et al. discloses associating an affinity value (i.e. contact level) to at least one said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative strength of said relationship (column 24, lines 46-50). However, de l'Etraz et al. does not disclose said associating step further comprising the step of: associating a first affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in one direction; and associating a second affinity value to

said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in another direction, whereby said relationship is a bidirectional relationship. Kasravi teaches associating bidirectional relationships (i.e. links) having a first set of characteristics for the relationship of the first node to the second node and a second set of characteristics for the second node to the first node (paragraph [0008], lines 7-10, paragraph [0009], lines 2-12 and paragraph [0026], lines 4-10). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 3) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 17) of de l'Etraz et al. with the feature of said associating step further comprising the step of: associating a first affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in one direction; and associating a second affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in another direction, whereby said relationship is a bidirectional relationship as taught by Kasravi, as both de l'Etraz et al. and Kasravi are directed to the software method (as per claim 3) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 17) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to analyze bidirectional strengths of relationships.

Regarding to claim 5 and 19, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. De l'Etraz et al. discloses determining at least two relationship linkages (i.e. cardinality of relationships) between said identified individuals (column 14, lines 46-50) and selecting (i.e. establishing) the optimal relationship path (column 3, lines 49-53, column 9, lines 32-36).

Art Unit: 4114

However, de l'Etraz et al. does not explicitly disclose determining a linkage strength for said each relationship linkage; and selecting a preferred one of said relationship linkages based upon said linkage strengths. Kasravi teaches a strength attribute that identifies the relative strength of the link (paragraph [0028], lines 7-8). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 5) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 19) of de l'Etraz et al. with the feature of said determining step further comprising the steps of: determining at least two relationship linkages between said identified individuals; determining a linkage strength for said each relationship linkage; and selecting a preferred one of said relationship linkages based upon said linkage strengths as taught by Kasravi, as both de l'Etraz et al. and Kasravi are directed to the software method (as per claim 5) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 19) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to analyze and select the optimal relationship between identified individuals based on the linkage strength.

Regarding to claim 6 and 20, de l'Etraz et al. discloses wherein each linkage strength (i.e. optimal pathway) is based at least in part upon affinity values (i.e. contact level) for relationships included within relationship linkages (column 24, lines 46-50).

Regarding to claim 10 and 24, de L'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, de L'Etraz et al. does not disclose detecting at least one communication between two individuals; and automatically updating at least one recorded relationship for said

Art Unit: 4114

individuals responsive to said communication. Senay teaches detecting at least one communication between two individuals (i.e. e-mail traffic, phone traffic) (paragraph [0017], lines 1-7); and automatically updating (i.e. enhance and enrich) at least one recorded relationship for said individuals responsive to said communication (paragraph [0018], lines 3-7). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 10) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 24) of de l'Etraz et al. with the feature of detecting at least one communication between two individuals; and automatically updating at least one recorded relationship for said individuals responsive to said communication as taught by Senay, as both de l'Etraz et al. and Senay are directed to the software method (as per claim 10) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 24) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to update the level of relationship based on the communication between two individuals.

Regarding to claims 28 and 31, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, de l'Etraz et al. does not disclose dynamically modifying at least a portion of said recorded relationships based upon communication events occurring within an information management system. Senay teaches detecting communication events occurring within an information management system (i.e. e-mail traffic, phone traffic) (paragraph [0017], lines 1-7); and modifying (i.e. enhance and enrich) at least said recorded relationship based upon communication events occurring within an information management system (paragraph [0018],

lines 3-7). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 28) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 31) of de l'Etraz et al. with the feature of dynamically modifying at least a portion of said recorded relationships based upon communication events occurring within an information management system as taught by Senay, as both de l'Etraz et al. and Senay are directed to the software method (as per claim 28) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 31) of analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to update the level of relationship based upon the communication events occurring within an information management system.

5. Claims 8 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over de l'Etraz et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,138) and in view of Kasravi (U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0249829 A1).

Regarding to claims 8 and 22, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. However, de l'Etraz et al. does not disclose wherein said chart is a unified relationship chart, wherein said unified relationship chart illustrates relationships among individuals, wherein said illustrated relationships include data from at least two different relationship categories.

Kasravi teaches a topical view (i.e. unified relationship chart), wherein the topical view illustrates relationships among individuals, wherein said illustrated relationships include data from at least two different relationship categories (i.e. different topics) (paragraph [0032], lines

Art Unit: 4114

1-14). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 8) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 22) of de l'Etraz et al. with the feature of wherein said chart is a unified relationship chart, wherein said unified relationship chart illustrates relationships among individuals, wherein said illustrated relationships include data from at least two different relationship categories as taught by Kasravi, as both de l'Etraz et al. and Kasravi are directed to the software method (as per claim 8) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 22) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to display the relationships among individuals from various relationship categories.

6. Claims 9 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over de l'Etraz et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,138) and in view of Li et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0171687 A1).

Regarding to claims 9 and 23, de l'Etraz et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. De l'Etraz et al. discloses said step of generating said chart further comprising the steps of: illustrating individuals (i.e. people) as nodes and relationships (i.e. associations) as line segments connecting said nodes (column 18, lines 5-9). However, de l'Etraz et al. does not disclose illustrating different relationship categories using visually distinct line segments. Li et al. discloses illustrating different relationship categories using visually distinct line segments (i.e. solid line, dotted line) (paragraph [0015], lines 5-8). Therefore, it would have been obvious to

Art Unit: 4114

one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the software method (as per claim 9) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 23) of de l'Etraz et al. with the feature of said step of generating said chart further comprising the steps of illustrating different relationship categories using visually distinct line segments as taught by Li et al., as both de l'Etraz et al. and Li et al. are directed to the software method (as per claim 9) and a machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine (as per claim 23) for analyzing relationships between individuals. The motivation for doing so would have been to analyze different relationship categories based on visually distinct line segments.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Abrams (U.S. Pat. No. 7,069,308 B2) teaches a method and apparatus for relationships in a social network. Chappel et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 7,216,088 B1) teaches a system and method for determining interdependencies between project team members.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to GEORGE PARK whose telephone number is (571)270-3547. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday (EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joe Cheng can be reached on (571) 272-4433. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

GP
10/13/07

/Joe H Cheng/
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Art Unit 4114